

an Olympic bronze medalist in 1960, and Ricardo "Rocky" Juarez, who won the World Championships in 1999 and a silver medal at the 2000 Olympics.

Although our school receives recognition for our famous graduates, the most important accomplishment over the past 75 years is its continued ability to produce educated citizens who are a credit to the community they live in. Jefferson Davis is more than a school. It is a living community of goals, dreams and accomplishments where students are pushed to excel.

In this community, we like to say, "Once a Jeff Davis Panther, always a Jeff Davis Panther." Our alumni are key to our school, and provide critical support to our mission. You can see our graduates in the community, and they are always willing to help, regardless of the task. They serve as examples of what students can do, of what they can become, if they work hard and believe in themselves. In this spirit of giving, and sacrifice, I would note that more than 80 Jeff Davis students have given their lives to protect our freedom in the wars and conflicts of our country.

The demographics of the community have changed over the years, but the commitment to excellence has never faltered. This school community sees a high school diploma not as an end product, but as a stepping stone for higher education. The focus of its program is to prepare students for post-high school education. Recently, 724 students took the PSAT exam in preparation for the SAT that is required for college admission. In partnership with Tenneco, El Paso Energy, and Project: GRAD, graduates can receive a \$4,000 scholarship to pursue higher education.

According to the U.S. 2000 census data, only 26 percent of Hispanics who enter college graduate, and the national Hispanic dropout rate is 34 percent. At Jeff Davis, however, a school that is more than 80 percent Hispanic, the dropout rate is less than 1 percent, over half of the students go to college, and 42 percent of those who go to college graduate. Some choose community or local junior colleges, but the list of universities with Jeff Davis alumni includes top-flight schools like the University of Houston, the University of Texas, Texas A&M, Princeton, Duke, Rice, Cornell, and the University of Virginia.

Our school is truly a community of learners. Parents, students, educators, and businesses come together to provide support so that students can succeed. The power of this learning community to realize its potential has remained constant throughout its 75 years. Jefferson Davis High School is successful because it is a vibrant, caring, community that encourages students to not only dream big, but to follow those dreams.

In that way, the first students who walked through these doors in 1926 are not that different from those here in the year 2002. Success is expected, and with support from our community, it is achieved—38 students graduated in 1927, and more than 300 will graduate in 2003. The goals, desires, and dreams of the students is the one constant over that time. I am proud of the progress this school is making, and proud to be a graduate of Jefferson Davis High School.

## TRIBUTE TO MR. GILBERTO MELENDEZ, IN MEMORIAM

### HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 21, 2002*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the attention of my colleagues to a distinguished gentleman who resided in the 6th District of New Jersey. It is with great respect that I pay tribute to Mr. Gilberto Melendez, who is being honored, In Memoriam, by the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County.

Mr. Gilberto Melendez was born in Fajardo, Puerto Rico on November 1, 1943. He and his family moved to the United States in 1944. His mother, Bernardina R. Melendez, worked as a bookkeeper for the newly founded ASPIRA in New York. He lived in New York until he moved to Neptune in 1968.

In 1973, Mr. Melendez was elected to the Neptune Township Committee and served two, three-year terms. In 1977, he was hired by Monmouth County as Secretary to the County Tax Board, a position that was later changed to County Tax Administrator. In 1979, he served as mayor of Neptune and served on the Planning Board. In March 1991, he was reappointed to the Planning Board of Neptune to serve a two-year term.

Additionally, Mr. Melendez was a member of the Kiwanis Club and the Liberty Fire Department in Neptune as well as the Puerto Rican Civic Association. Gilberto Melendez was a pioneer in the field of politics. He was recognized by County leaders and served as Mayor of Neptune at a time when very few Latinos were active in politics. He is remembered as a tax expert and a fair man who often spoke up on behalf of the average taxpayer.

Gil, as his sister, Elba Figueroa, called him describes him as, "A wonderful brother, always there when he was needed and just as caring as an older brother could possibly be. His sense of humor is what we most remember about him. Our parents brought us up with much love for each other and to love God because without Him we were nothing."

Stories of Mr. Melendez's popularity and compassion were legendary in the county. Friends would say that everywhere he went he knew somebody and everyone loved him.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to Mr. Melendez, as the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County honors him, In Memoriam, for his unwavering dedication and commitment to the advancement of Latinos.

## TRIBUTE TO AMY BLACK

### HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 21, 2002*

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Amy Black, a media specialist at Dunn Elementary School in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Recently, USA Today named Ms. Black as one of its 60 All-USA Teacher Team members. I congratulate Amy for this honor and thank her for 22 years of dedicated service to the children of Ft. Collins.

Exceptional teachers like Amy Black provide a strong educational foundation for the chil-

dren and young adults of this nation. Ms. Black must be commended for her commitment to excellence and her desire to help students succeed.

A citizen of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, Amy Black is truly a great American. I ask the House to join me in extending our sincere thanks and warmest congratulations to Ms. Amy Black.

## OUTSTANDING TEACHERS WITHIN MINNESOTA'S SIXTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

### HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 21, 2002*

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a number of outstanding teachers within Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District. Their dedication to America's youth is indeed commendable.

Everyday, these teachers enter the classroom prepared to provide students with the best education possible. They succeed in instilling children with the belief that they can achieve their goals. Their leadership provides students with the guidance to become successful. Their ability to shape our children's futures reflects their unceasing commitment to education.

I would like to thank these teachers for their enthusiastic efforts in preparing our children for the future.

Margaret Bruce, Hoover Elementary in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Recently, Walmart has recognized Margaret for her work with special needs students. Margaret makes each of her students feel special everyday.

Karen J. Carlson, McAulliffe Elementary in Hastings, Minnesota. As District Coordinator, Karen has improved the Hastings' schools reading and language arts program. She has also implemented a class for sixth graders that has successfully improved students' reading ability.

Kathy Dolinar, Rice Lake Elementary in Lino Lakes, Minnesota. Kathy has created a morning support program that brings parenting opportunities into Lexington. She has also opened a new drop-in center for students to interact with one another and familiarize themselves with technology.

Jim Glazer, Grey Cloud Elementary in Cottage Grove, Minnesota. As a media and technology teacher, Jim has developed an extra-curricula computer club and developed Grey Cloud Elementary's student-produced daily news program. He guides students and staff with successful media and technology instruction.

Alice Gracek, Glacier Hills Elementary. Alice opened Glacier Hills Elementary in 1993 and has proven to be a strong and influential teacher and leader. She guides the curriculum for the school district, specifically using her talents and knowledge to write science curriculum.

Jean Heisterkamp, Highland Elementary in Columbia Heights, Minnesota. As a speech and language teacher, Jean shows constant dedication to her students. Jean makes each student feel special by recognizing his or her special characteristics. Her leadership is apparent by her willingness to assist and mentor other teachers and their students.